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SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN
LIBERTY AND SLAVERY IN AMERICA.

A DISCOURSE

BY

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AT PORTLAND, MAINE,

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DISCOURSE.

OUR Governor, in a proclamation which does him honour as a Christian ruler, calls upon us to honour the example of our Forefathers and to seek "the good which may be derived from consecrating a secular day to meditation and the humbling ourselves together before the Lord," by observing this day as a day of Public Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer. The need of Humiliation, public and private, of Fasting in the old prophetic sense, of Prayer far more earnest, deep and vital than is common among us, I certainly shall be the last to question. For, to use an old expression, but which is not altogether true, "we have fallen upon evil days"; "judgment is turned away backward and justice standeth afar off; truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter." We live in the days when men "decree unrighteous decrees," and "write grievousness which they have prescribed, to turn aside the needy for judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless." We live to feel a new and dreadful illustration of Jeremiah's mournful words: "Oh that mine head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people. Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men. And they bend their tongues, like their bow, for lies; but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they

proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, saith the Lord. Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother ; for every brother will utterly supplant ” ; “ they have taught their tongue to speak lies and weary themselves to commit iniquity.” And still see we God’s words, as uttered by Isaiah’s hallowed lips, illustrated anew : “ Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God ; they ask of me the ordinances of justice ; they take delight in approaching to God.” The mournful strains of those great prophetic souls but too truly paint the audacious front of sin that defies God among us to-day—defies him all the worse because pretending a holy zeal for the honour of His law. We have, indeed, reason for Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer.

Of the various subjects fitting to this occasion, I have accepted one whose claim was too imperious to be resisted. I do not say “ selected,” for it was hardly a matter of choice. On this day of national humiliation, the thought uppermost is that of national sin ; and of national sins there is one of so appalling prominence that it would be a mere affectation to turn from it. I urged on you, last Sunday, an honest service this day. Let me not cast a shade over that recommendation by avoiding that theme which ought in all our souls to be a whip of shame and a spur to repentance, a subject deserving the devoutest consideration, whether on Sunday or on Fast day, in the church of God or the place of private prayer, in the statesman’s cabinet or the merchant’s office, in the secret soul of every man who respects himself, loves his race, or reveres his God.

I ask your attention, therefore, to some thoughts on the Significance of the Struggle between Liberty and Slavery in America.

My text is the demand made by the Athenian sophists of Paul :

“ We would know what these things mean ” (Acts xvii. : 20).

The significance of this struggle is very little understood, or, if understood, men are largely treacherous to their highest convictions. The former view is to be preferred as more charitable, and therefore more likely to be correct. Did men see it in its true colours, they would not dare proscribe utterance concerning it. The man who should attempt this would be overwhelmed by an indignant public opinion such as would meet him if he dared to advocate lying, robbery, murder or arson. So far from being kept out of the pulpit, excluded from Sunday, severed from religion, it would be the subject of special preaching and special prayer. Men would take up, in regard to it, Daniel Webster's memorable words uttered on the Rock of Plymouth, and repeat them as part of his charge to every teacher of religion. No longer regarded as a mere football kicked between two great political parties, it would become a weighty portion of every man's, woman's and child's religion. It would blend in each day's prayer. It would form a part of each man's earnest daily thought. Every loving mother would teach her children to revere the name of Liberty, and every father would swear his son at the altar as a foe to Slavery, even as Hamilcar swore the boy Hannibal as a foe to Rome.

How different from this the fact ; it needs no telling. Liberty no longer holds the high place in men's affections that she once occupied. Slavery is no longer, even in the eyes of New England men, an intolerable curse. The thought of it does not stir men to indignation. Opposition to it does not excite universal sympathy even in New England, that boasts herself to be free and is so free. The anti-slavery gatherings are small and feeble in numbers and in purse. The name of Abolitionist, though it be to abolish the foulest wrong that ever stained the earth, is a term of opprobrium and of reproach.

Let me first trace the course of events which has led to this result. It will set forth in a clearer right the significance of the great struggle.

The good angel and the evil angel of America appeared

at about the same time. It was in 1620 that Plymouth gave its stern welcome to 101 souls, as sturdy, brave and firm as its own famous rock. Strong of heart were they, *men of religion*, filled with an awful trust in God and an indomitable love of Liberty. These were the Fathers of New England, men of one idea, or at most two, but that idea great enough to be the life of a world, as it has been of New England ever since, and has made her what we are all proud to know she is.

In August, 1619, little more than a year before the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, the unconscious waters of Chesapeake Bay bore and gave their sunny welcome to a sadder freight than that which Plymouth Bay received. A dark slave-ship sailed up to Jamestown, with its dusky freight of 20 human souls, stolen from Africa. They came to a colony which, broken down at home, had sought America to retrieve its fortunes. Lazy and shiftless, they hailed the coming of their dark-skinned brethren, but with no brother's welcome ; no sympathy for the woes of those broken-hearted men ; but work, work, work, in a service harder than that of the children of Israel of old under the taskmasters of Egypt.

Here are the two ideas, Liberty and Slavery—planted at about the same time, in the virgin soil of the new continent ; the one in the North, the other in the South. They are deadly foes. Which shall conquer ?

A third idea, common to North and South, forms a bond of union and an important element in the struggle—the idea of Property.

Liberty and Slavery—which shall conquer ?

At the first they did not seem opposed. The moral vision of Christendom was not then educated to perceiving their eternal opposition. Even the early descendants of the Pilgrims saw it not. For, although they were Bible men, they held fast by the letter, which killeth. They saw there that, ages ago, slaves were held in Israel ; that men, provided they did not belong to the race of God's chosen children, might be held in slavery. They

did not, except dimly, perceive the *spirit* of the Bible, which uproots slavery forever. That don't come all at once to anybody. The letter was enough for them. The negroes being heathen and found convenient, slavery spread all over New England and existed in all the Colonies. But the spirit of liberty opposed it for all that. In spite of their literalism, which fettered their minds, those great souls had a true vision into the mysteries of the Gospel, which freed their action. Though slavery existed in New England, it was a far different thing from slavery in the Middle and Southern Colonies. Slaves were bought and sold, indeed, but their condition was rather that of indentured servants than of chattels personal. They were to have "all the liberties and Christian usages which the law of God, established in Israel, requires." That these were, on the whole, calculated to destroy slavery, every student of the Bible who has examined the question well knows.

Time passed on. The day of the great struggle for national independence began to dawn. The day of struggle for a higher independence had not begun to dawn. In the meantime, the climate and soil, the character of the people and the religion of the Northern Colonies silently, but steadily, pushed back slavery. The climate and soil, the character of the people and the irreligion of the Southern Colonies favoured its development. While Northern laws tended to amelioration and diminution of the evil, Southern laws tended to its extension and perpetuation. The English rule that slaves should follow the condition of the father was abolished, and that fatal rule adopted, parent of a large part of the existing slavery, that they should follow that of the mother. The recognised rule that slaves who had become Christians should be free was abolished, and it was decreed that Christians might be slaves. Answer enough this to the misstatement that England fastened slavery on this country.

The opposition between the principles *begins to appear* thus in their opposite tendencies. The struggle for

national liberty began. The tendency of this was to develop the sentiment of liberty over all the land ; in the Northern Colonies to strengthen the tendency towards liberty already existing, in the Southern to retard the progress of the opposite tendency. So strong and noble was the feeling that it found expression in that magnificent paper, certainly to be forever treasured by every American—yea, by every man that loves his brother-man—the Declaration of Independence ; not a tissue of “glittering generalities,” as it has been called by a New England man, but of fundamental truths, without which the nation must perish.

The great struggle ended. America became free. And now the struggle for the independence of *man* began to dawn. The two principles, which had flowed silently side by side for a century, now began to be found incompatible. The child, grown to majority, had now to take care of himself. Shall he follow his good angel, or shall the evil mislead him to his ruin ?

The two Ideas came face to face, over against each other, in the debates on the Constitution. Northern delegates, and the noblest of the Southern, held out against Slavery. South Carolina and Georgia were firm as a rock in its behalf. The two parties seemed immovable. A great gulf was fixed between them. How could it be bridged over ? The appeal to the instinct of Property in the Northern mind finally settled the question. Slavery was permitted to exist. The Slave Trade was left undisturbed for twenty years—for a commercial consideration ! Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire were found voting for this last by the side of Georgia, the two Carolinas and Maryland ! Delaware and Virginia ranged into line with Pennsylvania and New Jersey against it.

The evil deed was done. The sin openly committed when it might have been destroyed. The consequences were to come.

The enthusiasm and the memories of the Revolution did not perish at once. They still worked in the minds

of many. Slavery was odious to the best and greatest minds. It will be only necessary to mention such names as Franklin, Madison, Patrick Henry, Jefferson and Washington as its foes. The love of Freedom was strong in the public mind. The celebrated Ordinance of 1787, passed in the same year as the present United States Constitution was adopted, was adopted by a unanimous vote. It excluded slavery from the then North-West Territory. Energetic measures were taken to procure emancipation. The result was that gradually Slavery was abolished or died out in the Northern States. Slavery was weak as yet, strong only in the obstinacy of its wicked will. But it lived still. Nourished by the foreign Slave Trade, it continued its vampyre growth. As the market for Southern staples increased, and cotton came into cultivation, slaves rose in value. The "property" must be protected. The Southern States demanded, in 1793, a law for the rendition of Fugitives. They obtained one, which contained the most odious provision of the Fugitive Slave act of 1850, struck down the constitutionally guaranteed right of trial by jury for every man charged with being a slave, and put it in the power of every magistrate base enough to be bribed or weak enough to be persuaded to send a freeman into slavery.

The tradition of Liberty still lived, though the love of it began to slacken under the influence of commercial prosperity and peace. The year fixed as the term at which the Slave Trade might be abolished, 1808, came, and the *foreign* Slave Trade was abolished, though not without a battle. The *internal* Slave Trade, however, remains to this day untouched—one of the most cruel and barbarous of all the creations of this abominable crime.

Here Liberty paused. She had done what she could, and looked now to a speedy decay on the part of Slavery. Her energies were suspended under this delusive hope. She had long looked forward to it, as men now look forward to non-extension, as the axe which should destroy slavery. She now expected to see Slavery droop and die.

Slavery, however, now grown strong and consistent, could do without the foreign Slave Trade. Instead of dying, she brought a new State into the Union—Louisiana, purchased from France, with its new votes, its new influence, and a new principle which must be used indefinitely for the furtherance of the purposes of Slavery. Grown bolder by necessity and success, ten years after, in 1821, the Slave Power, over the back of Mr. Clay's fatal Compromise, brought Missouri into the confederation. Liberty, not yet dead, affrighted, arose and made a bold and desperate opposition. But she was no longer uppermost in the nation's heart. At the best she held a divided affection. Traditionally she was revered and worshipped, but, like Religion among us now, too good save for holidays and Sundays—not useful enough for every day wear. Consequently, before the black solid column of Slavery she was compelled to retire.

The two Ideas are now fairly face to face, the one strong in the strength of truth and right, the other strong in the flush of success and the pride of power and will. They recognise now that they are hostile. Slavery says "We will drive you to the wall, and when we have you there once more, we mean to keep you there, and nail you down like base money." There is no mistaking that language.

Liberty does not return the taunt. Even were she able, she would not. But she is not able. She feels a creeping weakness in her frame. The Free States have now a divided affection. They are no longer hers with a single love. The instinct of Property, grown into a bad love of Gain, now divides the empire of the Northern heart with her. Slavery, on the other hand, is a unit. She is determined and resolute in extending her bounds and power. A danger appears on her Southern frontier. Texas becomes free from Mexico and adopts a free Constitution. This is not to be tolerated. A Free State on the Southern frontier is dangerous to Slavery. And so Texas must be annexed as a Slave State. In face of fierce Northern

opposition, which strangely cooled under an appeal to Northern cupidity, Texas was annexed, and, of all the days in the year, on the 22d of December, 1845! Was this coincidence accidental? Was there not a deep significance in it? Was it not the rubbing out from American politics of the great Idea fixed in it on that memorable 22d December a century and a quarter before. Liberty now is conquered.

From this point the descent is swift and fearful. Slavery became the controlling element in American politics. Restless and insatiate, it soon led the country into the meanest, most cowardly and wicked of wars—the war with Mexico. The defection of Northern men became appalling. “My country, however bounded,” “My country, right or wrong,” as if there was no Righteousness, no Religion, no God in the universe, became applauded sentiments. The newspapers teemed with them. The war ended. A battle took place over the new territory robbed from Mexico. It was long, and fierce, and *deadly*. A Compromise settled it. Slavery triumphed again, and this time at an awful cost to New England. For now Northern degradation was complete. The great man of New England, the idol of New England idolatry, the hope and pride of every New England man, snatched from his head the laurels of a long life, that he might bow that honoured crown to the hateful yoke. I know no one sadder event in American history; none that seems to demand so profound a sorrow. To see a great *man fall*—and such a fall!—is a sight to make angels weep. The heart of New England groaned with an unspeakable sorrow. Under the shadow of that great affliction her soul sat dumb. She scarcely noticed how many of her prominent men hastened, in the new light gained by the removal of that colossal form, to conquer the prejudices in favour of Liberty which they had sucked in from their mothers’ bosoms. She had no heart now to welcome back the great fallen one. She could not understand the new injunctions that he laid upon her. She could not under-

stand, though *he* said it, that there was no Higher Law, that her religious convictions must be silenced, that the traditions of the Pilgrim Fathers were all an empty sound. And the speedy revelations made her by Southern man-stealers in her own streets, a Court-house in chains, men carried off without a jury trial to a bondage worse than death, were not the best of commentaries to help her weak understanding. She mourned with a bitter sorrow—I trust that godly sorrow which worketh repentance not to be repented of. Those dreary, dreary days! As I look back on them now, in the freer air of this time, I wonder how we breathed then at all.

But though Liberty was thus trodden under foot, she still lived. She forsook the temples where her *form* was worshipped, but herself defamed, to take up her abode, not in a manger, but in an equally obscure place, a city cellar. Like her dear Lord and friend, the Christ, whose presence always brings Liberty, she deserted not the ungrateful men who crucified her, but took on her the form of a servant, that even thus she might bless mankind. In 1831 her voice was heard, from that humble chamber, in tones that went straight to the heart of Slavery, “I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and *I will be heard.*” In that cellar, in a man so obscure that the Mayor of Boston had difficulty in finding him out—the guilty heart of Slavery, however, felt the thrill of his first tones—the freedom of a race began. The Declaration of Independence, indeed, was given forth—and *that* Declaration was that *Slavery must die*. That humble man filled the Slave Power with alarm. It knew instinctively that the beginning of the end was come. How is it that politicians, instead of wearying themselves and everybody else with their theories of non-extension, do not take a hint from this fact? The Slave Power set a price of \$5,000 on his head. But he went on, gathered a few, perhaps eleven, I know not, faithful souls, who proclaimed boldly, in spite of coldness and abuse, of

threats and mobs, the Gospel of Universal Freedom. He proved himself a prophet by the ancient approved tests of prophecy, the purity of his life and the fulfilment of his predictions. He was a humble man, unknown, a man of one idea, but that idea large enough to regenerate a nation. He appealed not to political parties—they were corrupt; no longer to the Churches—they frowned on Liberty; not to force—that is an unchristian way of advancing Truth, or rather it is no way—but to the conscience of the nation and to that alone.

Men of a thousand shifts and wiles, look here !
See one straightforward conscience put in pawn
To win a world; see the obedient sphere
By bravery's simple gravitation drawn !

O Truth ! O Freedom ! how are ye still born
In the rude stable, in the manger nursed !
What humble hands unbar those gates of morn
Through which the splendours of the New Day burst !

What ! shall one monk, scarce known beyond his cell,
Front *Rome's* far-reaching bolts, and scorn her frown ?
Brave Luther answered Yes; that thunder's swell
Rocked Europe, and discharmed the triple crown.

Whatever can be known of earth we know,
Sneered Europe's wise men, in their snail shells curled;
No, said one man in Genoa, and that *No*
Out of the dark created this New World.

And so it was here. That brave conscience, sowing itself on soil fertile with Pilgrim life, brought forth fruit. It was the leaven that leavened the whole lump of New England. It did not work alone. Leaven never does. God worked with it. The stream of events confirmed again, again, and yet again, that man's most daring prophecy. Yet he continued despised and rejected, a man of sorrows indeed, as every true Reformer is, and is despised and rejected still. The prophet has no honour in his own country now, any more than in the days of Christ. But there is honour in store for him. When the war of Independence now raging shall end in victory, and the nation settle from the strife, and men shall

reverently recall the memory of the noble souls who led the van of battle, the name of GARRISON shall hold the foremost and brightest place.

But to return. The political and moral corruption consequent on the Fugitive Slave Bill soon permitted new assaults on Liberty. The repeal of the Missouri Compromise, that unnameable breach of plighted faith, stunned the Northern States. It opened a new view of Slavery, but that they might have seen before had they but felt disposed. The events which have succeeded that with astounding rapidity—the Ostend Manifesto, the atrocities in Kansas, the assault on New England's noblest Senator, the designs on Cuba, the beginning of agitation for the revival of the foreign Slave Trade, once declared piracy, and, last, that monstrous decision of the United States Supreme Court, which has fallen on us like a thunderclap, and whose breadth and depth of wickedness we have as yet no idea of—are too familiar to us all to need more than mention here. They may well make us all pause, and exclaim, in the words of our text, “we would know what these things mean.”

We have thus rapidly sketched the course of the great struggle between Liberty and Slavery in our country. We have seen that the two Ideas came to America together—that then public opinion thought them compatible : this delusion gradually broke away and was dispelled in the great tumult of the Revolution ; that, after that struggle, the sentiment of Liberty was universal and Slavery frowned upon ; that gradually Slavery stole on its unguarded foe ; came to a position of equality ; and thence, by a rapid succession of bold steps, to the position of control. And there it stands to-day—the Congress, the Executive, the Army, the Navy, and, most powerful of all, the Judiciary in its hands. And yet, in all these seventy years, the Free States have grown in number and population, so that now they outnumber by one the Slave States, and vastly surpass them in population, in prosperity, wealth, mechanical ingenuity, and moral and religious

character. But the love of Liberty has declined ; and men sit quiet to-day under an enactment which, seventy years ago, would have set the country in an inextinguishable blaze from end to end. Nay, signs appear of preparation for a new compromise with that deceitful power which controls the land. Men talk still of limiting the extension of Slavery, in the face of a Supreme Court decree that knocks the ground from under their feet. Limit a monster grown to full age, whose babyhood was more than a match for their fervent young love of Liberty ! Limit a monster who has proved himself a monster of iniquity ! I am no politician, but I have common sense ; and my common sense tells me it cannot be done. It is impracticable, were it not wrong. The Slave Power beats us vastly in cunning. It has the national power in its hands. It has no conscience. It can beat us at its weapons. But take the hint given by that one word from the obscure cellar in Boston. Throw yourselves on the Eternal Law of God. Brand the monster as a monster of iniquity, and you'll crumple him up like a piece of paper.

The aspect of this dreadful struggle is fearfully dark to-day. But there are signs of a coming dawn. The Almighty still lives. The devoted band who love God and man so well that they never can consent that God's child or man's brother shall ever be a slave, grows slowly, preparing for a great and glorious future. The struggle now is in reality a struggle between this little band and the powers of Slavery. I know very few of you believe this, but it is true, and time will prove it. I am content to wait. But I am not content that they who come within the range of my voice, and whose well-being is very near my heart, should neglect this great salvation. It has, my friends, a profound significance for us, will we but open our eyes to behold and stretch our hand to grasp it.

Let me now speak of its significance. I must be brief.

1. This struggle is significant, as it offers to us every one a glorious opportunity and a noble means of developing the highest manly and womanly character. It is a

stern discipline, this discipline of Anti-Slavery. It puts all sorts of shams to a terribly severe test. Look at it yourselves a moment with the eye of your common sense and you shall see at once. What exercise of faith so strong as that which shall lead us to take up a cause against such fearful odds as oppose us here? What better school of patience than to work on, year after year, amid misunderstanding, misrepresentation, coldness, desertion, trying, with but small success, to help those who are unwilling to be convinced? What school of love to God and man so valuable as that which shall teach you, or give you abundant occasion for, its meekest and most self-constraining exercise? What trial of honesty and of love of truth nobler than that which puts you forever on the hunt for the truth, which casts you on that as your chief foundation, and makes you strong in that alone? What training of courage so fair as that which compels you to utter convictions opposed to the current opinions, and which shall bring on yourselves notice, perhaps odium? What culture of the finest humanities so beautiful as that which leads you to regard every human being as a child of God, no matter how degraded, how desolate, how forlorn? What development of the moral sense within you sublimer than that which plants you on the Eternal Rock of Justice, Righteousness and the High Law of God, demanding that these be administered faithfully to men, women and little ones whom you know only through report? What proof and trial of self-sacrifice more holy, and more dear to the heart of God, than the taking up the cause of them whom men look down upon as unworthy of regard? We glory in the old heroic days of knighthood and chivalry. But what made them so glorious? The shining armour, the gleaming gold, the flaunting banner, or the trumpet ringing in the breeze? Was it the splendour of developed manhood imparting some of its own fire and spirit to the brave creature which bore it, making both nobler? I think not. These men take delight in, but they touch not the heart. It is what the heart embalms that lives. Oh, none of these.

It was, that knightly valour deemed itself honoured in being the champion of the oppressed ; in being that which God here gives us the opportunity of becoming.

But it shall help you not by discipline alone. It shall help you by giving a clearer vision. Truth is bread to the soul. This cause of Liberty bravely taken up shall open your eyes. You shall see wondrously the difference of things. Shams shall be marvellously exposed. It shall help you to the perception of the noblest self-sacrifice now working unobserved, save by the unobtrusive eye of God. You shall be amazed, your heart shall bound with joy to behold the grandeur and the humbleness of the chivalry of our country and age—a chivalry which most men see not at all—a chivalry hidden behind dark skins and under the humble garments of many a brave but all unnoticed man and woman. I do not hesitate to refer you to the records of the Anti-Slavery struggle and to the ranks of the despised and persecuted opponents of Slavery for examples of heroism which shall make your eyes dim with delight, if you have the heart to recognise them, and for men and women equalled by no other class in society for their combination of high qualities ; men and women of a love stronger than death, of an honesty that you can trust with untold gold, of a womanly tenderness of feeling, of a faith in God that will trust Him though He slay. You call them narrow, as if that were worse than to be untrue. Narrow perhaps they are ; but it is the narrowness not of ideas or of heart, but of compression by a pressure from without which has made them firm and solid as cannon-balls. As I think on them all, and on the mighty agency which this great struggle has exerted on them in making them men and women indeed, I feel profoundly that we are unworthy to take up this glorious cause. To take it up with all our feeble might would make us men and women ; would baptize us anew into the spirit of our great forefathers. Far from thinking it a condescension on our part, we should thank God for the great privilege and boon of being permitted to take up a work so ennobling.

This, friends, I think, is the great significance of this struggle for Liberty. It makes a nobler race of men and women—men and women indeed and in earnest. Such earnest natures are the fiery pith, the compact nucleus, round which systems grow ; mass after mass becomes inspired therewith, and whirls impregnate with the central glow.

2. It is a struggle in which the mightiest interests are involved. Men tell you that it is merely a political affair. But, if they are honest in saying so, they do not know what they are saying. It is, indeed, a political affair of the most serious importance ; involving the very existence of the Republic. In fact, a Republic exists no longer except in some of our State Governments. Our National Government is an odious Oligarchy. But this is more than a political matter. Have we not seen that in the early history of our country the English rule that children should follow the condition of the *father* was abolished, and the rule adopted that they should follow that of the mother—a rule whose disastrous effects on the *morals* of the country no language can portray—which has produced that very amalgamation that men adduce as an unanswerable argument against abolition ? So far as it has force, it is in favour of abolition : for slavery is its most fruitful cause. Have we not seen that, in defiance of European sentiment, it was early decreed that *Christians* might be slaves ? Christ's disciples bought and sold, married and divorced, re-married and re-divorced, treated as cattle ! Oh, God ! the thought is too horrible. Our holy religion thus trampled under foot. Do we not all know that, in defiance of plighted troth, a solemn contract was trampled under foot after the consideration had been received ? Truth thus trodden on. And surely the remembrance of violence in the halls of legislation, of unparalleled barbarities in Kansas, of the brazen usurpation in the Supreme Court of the United States, is fresh enough in all our memories to tell us that peace, courtesy, humanity, justice are all at stake. And do we not all know that

slavery itself is the "sum of all villainies," a colossal injustice, as my brother of this city well said, on last 4th of July, "robbery its father and its mother a lie." Oh! friends, this is no temporary or superficial matter. It is one which concerns all that is and ought to be dear and sacred to our hearts, all that is cherished by man everywhere. It touches very nearly our manhood and womanhood, those sacred affections which are the essence and charm of our homes, that sacred relation of marriage whose purity is essential to the well-being of any nation, those eternal principles of Righteousness and Justice, Honour and Truth which are the very foundation of society. And, last and deepest of all, that Religion which is the very life of every soul. The conflict is not a strife of politics alone, but a struggle of Religion and Irreligion, of Order with Disorder, of Self-sacrifice with Selfishness, of Civilization with Barbarism, of Right with Wrong, of God with Satan.

3. And lastly, indications show that it is the final struggle between Liberty and Slavery. Slavery has disappeared from Europe. The European nations, except Spain, have freed their slaves abroad. In Russia it is very different from ours and approaching gradually freedom. Slavery now awaits only America's decision to disappear from the earth, and for the emancipated nations to chant one great triumph completed in the struggle of Christianity with sin. The world shall then have taken one step Godward. It is the mightiest struggle the world has ever seen. It differs from all others in being within ourselves. It is not at a distance, as West India emancipation was. It is the casting out of the demon which shall tear our own body. It is like the struggle between a man and his own deepest sin. That cast out, it is cast out forever. The conflict hastens to its decision. On the one side the black Goliath of Slavery comes forward from the midst of the Philistine host of all the tyrannies, despotism, slaveries, wickednesses of the earth. He is bold and confident. He defies the armies of Israel.

The young David of Liberty, the youngest son of his father, whom his brothers will not believe in, strong, not in his political armour, but simply "in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel," stands in the midst of the affrighted men of Israel, the hopes, the prayers, the oppressed, the good, the free of mankind, who fear that his littleness cannot stand the mighty shock. The lists are clearing. All other combats cease to have interest. Tariffs, Banks, Sub-treasuries, Free Trade, all retire from the field. The expectant nations of the earth pause awhile and gather around and watch the conflict. The oppressor and the oppressed, the tyrant and the serf, the aristocrat and the democrat, the well-fed and the hungry look on with eager eyes—eyes sharply watching the signs of the coming day of decision. Never before was there such a struggle. Never before hung hopes so vast and so various, so mighty and so deep upon a single issue. The eyes of mankind are fixed upon it; the fate of mankind for long ages to come is suspended there. If the giant fall, a jubilee for all the oppressed is near, such as earth ne'er saw nor dreamed before. If David fall, the progress of mankind is turned backward, the lessons of history are unlearned, and the human race for centuries to come must wander in darkness, and wade through seas of blood to regain the point where now it stands. That decision-hour may be very near. Men and women, are you prepared to meet it?

Such, my friends, is some of the significations of this momentous struggle. It is now the centre of the world's gaze. It is, of all earthly questions, beyond all doubt the chief. God's new Messiah, in very deed, it offers to every one of us an opportunity for growth in manly and womanly life such as the age of chivalry never dreamed of. Reaching, as it does, away down to the very manhood of man, it includes within its great embrace everything which distinguishes man from the brute and from matter, intellect, government, morality, religion, all the possibilities of man's future life. The great question is

working itself out of the long struggle of ages, to be settled on its own merits. Now freed from all extraneous questions that distracted men's attention by their appeal to personal and selfish feeling, Liberty and Slavery, naked now, approach each other in final conflict. Liberty or Slavery, which will you have? Humanity hangs breathless on the answer.

In the presence of this great emergency, is not this a time for humiliation, fasting and prayer? Humiliation, that we have all been so blind to God's handwriting on the wall, so deaf to God's high summons, so careless of His grand opportunity? Fasting, not by abstaining from material food, but by penitence and sorrow, by high resolution and an earnest purpose of a nobler life? Prayer, that we may have strength and grace given us to achieve a life whose end shall be the breaking every yoke, whether physical, mental, moral or spiritual? Prayer, that our country, in this great hour of her trial, may be true to the memories of the Pilgrim Fathers, true to the great idea from which she was born and on which she grew up, true to the interests of down-trodden and oppressed humanity everywhere, true to the mighty opportunity and gigantic trusts given into her charge by the God of Nations.